

*GOD glorified by offering
Praise.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at

Mr. HARRIS'S Meeting-Place

I N

GOODMAN'S-FIELDS,

August 1, 1719.

(The Anniversary of His MAJESTY'S
happy Accession to the Throne.)

To the SOCIETY who attend the Evening
Lecture on the LORD'S Day at the same Place.

By SIMON BROWNE. *X*

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible and
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169

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TO THE
MINISTERS who preach, and
the GENTLEMEN who encourage
the Evening Lecture, at Mr. Harris's
Meeting-Place in Goodman's-Fields.

SIRS,



THE following Discourse comes abroad at
your Request. Your Candor, I doubt not,
will overlook the many Imperfections you
will easily find in it. The Blessing of
G O D, with all its Defects, can make it
useful. The Subject is the noblest in the World. Praise
is that Religious Exercise, that at once honours G O D
most, and gives the highest Elevation, and the most
genuine and exalted Pleasure to our Minds. And, We
can turn our Eyes, we can carry our Thoughts no where
through the whole Frame of Nature, but we shall meet
with G O D, and some glorious Manifestations of his
Being and Perfections to provoke Us to praise Him. But
when we consult his Word, and see the Impresses of his
Glories on the great and astonishing Contrivance of our
Salvation, by Jesus Christ, we must be lost in Wonder,
quite overwhelm'd with the Splendor of the divine Ma-
nifestations. The Lustre is so great, as to transform the
Mind, that looks steddily on it, into the same * Likeness
from

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The DEDICATION.

from Glory to Glory. Matter of Praise can never be wanting where the Heart is well disposed for the Exercise. Occasions present themselves on every Side, and the Arguments crowd upon Us.

THAT how many among Mankind altogether withhold this Tribute from GOD, and how deficient are the Payments made by the Best? If any one be stirred up to the Duty by this Discourse, who hath hitherto liv'd in the Neglect of it, or any serious Christian, to the more frequent and lively Performance of it, I shall think my Pains have an abundant Recompence, nor will you go without your Share of Thanks. But this Effect must be expected from a divine Blessing, in imploring which, I doubt not but you will help Me.

AND now, my Brethren, may you have Success in your great Master's Work. May the Pleasure of the LORD prosper in your Hands. May you promote this blessed Work of Praise, by spreading a Spirit of serious and lively Religion among all who attend on your Ministry. And,

MAY you, Gentlemen, make daily Increase, with all the Increases of GOD. May your Hearts and Tongues be tuned to the high Praises of your Maker and Redeemer, and your Lives be an Honour and Ornament to your Christian Profession. And may GOD add daily to your Number such as shall be saved. These are the sincere good Wishes of

Your humble Servant,

SIMON BROWNE



PSAL. l. v. 23. *former Part.*

Whoso offereth Praise glorifieth me.



IT is not so much the distinctive Character of Man that he is Rational, as that he has such a Measure of Reason, as makes him capable of Religion. Inferior Animals seem to have *their* Measure of Reason, as well as we; and, in many Instances, make better use of it. But herein Man differs from Them, that he is capable of employing the rational Powers God has given Him, in the Service of his Maker and the Exercises of Religion. And, indeed, true and genuine Religion improves our mental Powers to the utmost of which they are capable. In the highest Acts of Religion, the various Faculties of our Minds are in their highest Elevation, and feel and exert the greatest Vigor. The Soul is at once calm and yet transported: Perfectly possess'd of itself, and yet carried as far beyond itself as possible, and in Flames of Devotion offer'd up to God; exerting itself to the uttermost, and yet all the while at perfect

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fect Rest, because inexpressible Pleasure and Satisfaction accompany these Acts.

It is only in the heavenly State that Religion is in perfection: And the blessed Inhabitants of the better World are for ever employ'd in the most exalted Exercises of it, and feel perpetual Pleasure in such glorious Employment, and that always in proportion to the Life and Vigour put forth in it. Now what is the Employment of Heaven according to the Scripture Account of it, but Devotion, that is, *Love and Praise*? This is what eternally employs and entertains the People of Heaven. Work that never wastes their Spirits, but renews their Strength. Work that never tires, but recruits, and delights, and ravishes them for ever. And what yields *them* the greatest Satisfaction, doth at the same time yield the greatest Tribute of Glory to the *most High*. Love and Praise, the most devout Love and the most perfect Praise, immediately address'd and offer'd up to Him, are the most direct and full Acknowledgments of his Glory and Excellency, that can possibly be made.

It should therefore be the Top of our Ambition, and the continual Endeavour of our Lives, to grow meet for the Happiness of Heaven; and finally, be made Partakers of it: And that we may be meet for Heaven, it should be our Endeavour to grow familiar with the Work of Heaven, to accustom ourselves to heavenly Exercises, *i. e.* to the Exercises of *Loving* and *Lauding* the great LORD of Heaven and Earth. There is infinite Reason why we should do so, both out of regard to GOD and ourselves. Yet the best of us come very short of our Duty upon this Head, and for this Reason find so little Pleasure, and make so little Progress in Religion. It can't but be proper therefore, at this Season, to call your Thoughts and mine own to such a Subject, and see

see what Effect the Argument of the Text will have upon Us, and how 'twill stir us up to this noble and delightful Work. *Whoso offereth Praise glorifieth me.* In discoursing from the Words I shall consider,

- I. *First*, WHAT is implied in *offering Praise*.
- II. *Secondly*, IN what Sense he may be said to *glorify* GOD, who makes this Offering.
- III. *Thirdly*, WHAT are the principal Subjects of Praise to GOD. And,
- IV. *Lastly*, APPLY all. I am,

I. *First*, To shew what is implied in *offering Praise*. And here the Enquiry will be twofold.
 (1. *First*,) What are we to understand by *Praise*?
 (2. *Secondly*,) What by *offering it*?

(1. *First*,) WHAT are we to understand by *Praise*? Now Praise, in the general Sense of it, is nothing else but commending One. And all Commendation implies in it an Acknowledgment and Publication, either of the commendable Properties, or Performances of the Person we commend. That we are convinc'd of Them in our Hearts, and tell them to his Honour. For to ascribe those commendable Properties to any which we ourselves do not believe him possess'd of, is not to praise, but play the Parasite. 'Tis to flatter, not to commend. And whatever Esteem we have for any in our Hearts, we do not praise them till this is publish'd, and voluntarily made known to their Honour. And this is the general Notion of praising GOD. It is the taking Notice of his Excellencies, having an Heart duly affected with them, making honourable Acknowledgment of them to Himself, and publishing them to the World. And Praise, in this Notion of it, may be distinguish'd into *Praise* in the most restrained Sense, and *Thanksgiving*.

giving. They differ in this, that Praise makes such Acknowledgment of divine Excellencies for their own sake, and whether we have any Benefit or Expectation of Advantage from them or no; but Thanksgiving is praising GOD for Benefits bestow'd on Us. The Holy Scriptures use the Word in both Senses.

IN the more restrained Sense in such Passages as these. * *Make a joyful Noise to the LORD all ye Lands. Sing forth the Honour of his Name: Make his Praise glorious: Come and see the Works of GOD.* † *Sing to the LORD, bless his Name, declare his Glory among the Heathen, his Wonders among all People; for the LORD is Great and greatly to be bless'd, Honour and Majesty are before Him, Strength and Beauty are in his Sanctuary.* ‖ *Who can utter the mighty Acts of the LORD? Who can shew forth all his Praise?* And elsewhere GOD's being ** above all Nations, and his Glory above the Heavens, and having none like Him, are assigned as Reasons why he should be praised. To the same Purpose, saith the Psalmist, †† *Every Day will I bless Thee and praise thy Name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised, and his Greatness is unsearchable. One Generation shall declare thy Works to another, and shall praise thy mighty Acts. I will speak of the glorious Honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wondrous Works. All thy Works shall praise Thee O LORD, and thy Saints shall bless Thee.* And elsewhere, *† *Let them praise the Name of the LORD, for his Name alone is excellent, and his Glory above the Earth and Heaven.* And again, †* *Praise Him for his mighty Acts, praise him according to his excelling Greatness.* In all which either the Perfections of the divine Nature, or the Excellency and Majesty of his Government, or the

* Psal. lxxvi. 1, 2, 5. † Psal. xcvi. 2, 3. ‖ Psal. cvi. 2. ** Psal. cxliii. 4, 5. †† Psal. cxlv. 2, &c. *† Psal. cxlviii. 13. †,† Psal. cl. 2.

the Glorious Effects of his Power, or no less glorious Appearances of his Wisdom and Goodness, are made the Subject of Praise, abstracting from all Benefit which we ourselves might receive from Them. And this is Praise in the noblest Sense. It is praising GOD for his own sake.

BUT the other Signification of the Word, when it is made to stand for Thanksgiving, is the more common. In this Sense, saith the Psalmist, * *Oh that Men would praise the LORD for his Goodness, and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men.* In this Sense, he saith elsewhere, † *Ye that fear the LORD praise Him, all ye Seed of Jacob glorify Him; for He hath not despised nor abhorred the Affliction of the Afflicted, neither hath He hid his Face from Him, but when he cried to Him he heard.* So again, ** *Thou hast turned my Mourning into Dancing, thou hast put off my Sackcloth, and girded me with Gladness, to the End that my Glory may sing Praises to Thee, and not be silent. Oh LORD my GOD, I will give Thanks to Thee for ever.* Where praising GOD is plainly made equivalent to giving Thanks. So again, †† *He brought me up out of an horrible Pit, out of the miry Clay, and set my Feet on a Rock, and hath established my Goings, and he hath put a new Song into my Mouth, even Praise to our GOD.* So again, *† *Oh bless our GOD ye People, and make the Voice of his Praise to be heard, who holdeth our Soul in Life, and suffereth not our Feet to be moved.* And thus, to mention no more, saith David, †*† *I will praise Thee with my whole Heart, before the Gods will I praise Thee. I will worship towards thy holy Temple, and praise thy Name, for thy loving Kindness and thy Truth; for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name.* And this is properly giving to God the Praise of his Fullness

* Psal. cvii. 8, 15, &c. † Psal. xxii. 23, 24. ** Psal. xxx. 11, 12.
 †† Psal. xl. 2, 3. *† Psal. lxvi. 8. 9. †*† Psal. cxxxviii. 1, 2.

Fullness and flowing Benignity, display'd in Acts of Kindness to Us, either by immediate Vouchsafement to ourselves, or else to others with whom we have Alliance and Concerns. **T**hanks are always suppos'd to be given for Kindnesses receiv'd: And Kindnesses receiv'd ever signify both the Sufficiency and kind Inclinations of Him who confers them. When therefore Thanks are render'd to God, his Wealth and Bounty are celebrated. Acknowledgment is made that He is immensely rich in Himself, and beneficent and kind to Them who offer up their Thanks. **S**o that in both Senses of the Word, you see Confession is made of the Divine Perfections, and God is esteem'd, admir'd and applauded for them. This is praising God. But,

(2. Secondly,) I AM to consider what is implied in *offering Praise*. The Original doth most properly signify Sacrificing. And whatever is sacrificed is brought into God's Presence, and tender'd to Him by the Person who makes the Sacrifice. So that the Praise here meant seems to be a direct Act of Religion, such as is immediately offer'd up to God. Indeed, Praise, in a less limited Sense, is not altogether excluded. We may praise God when we do not directly address ourselves to Him, as is plain from the general Sense of the Word given under the foregoing Head. We may commend Him to our Fellow Creatures, and tell them of all his wondrous Works. We may endeavour to bring into view his glorious Excellencies, and the wonderful Appearances of them on the Works of his Hands; and thereby engage their Esteem, their Wonder, and their Devotion. We may relate to them the manifold Instances of his Kindness and Bounty to Us, and the vast Obligations we are under to Him, upon their Account, and this that we may prevail with them to advert to their own Obli-

Obligations also. To do thus is to praise God, and this Praise may be an Offering too, if it be given with a direct Intention to honour God; and if the devout Heart doth but turn its Eye towards God, and invite him thereby to take Notice of his Intention.

BUT *offering Praise* is a direct Act of Religion, address'd immediately to God, either perform'd in Silence by the Mind itself, or express'd with the Mouth. For God may be prais'd by the Mind's attending to the Perfections of his Nature, to the Operations of his Hands, or the Effects of his Bounty, by being affected with all; and then looking upward, and inviting Him to witness to the Esteem, Wonder and Devotion it hath for God. He *who searcheth the Hearts and trieth the Reins*, to whom *all Things are naked and open*, needs not to have the Sentiments of our Minds put into Words, and uttered with our Mouths, that He may know Them. He is a Witness to all that passeth within Us. And the Heart may be full of Devotion, and God may have Praise offered by it, in the most lively and serious Manner, when the Tongue never stirs. As on the other hand, the Tongue may be loud in the Praises of God, when in reality there is no Praise offered up to Him, because the Heart keeps not pace with the Tongue, and the Words used are no Signification of the true Sense of the Mind. But this Offering is most perfect, when the real Devotion of the Heart tunes the Tongue, and the highest Sentiments which the Mind can form of God, are express'd in suitable Language, and address'd to Him. I say, 'tis then the most perfect Offering, because our Fellow Creatures are made Witnesses to our high Thoughts of God, and are excited or assisted in paying the same Homage to Him. For hereby it is plain he is most honoured by our Praises, in the only Sense wherein he can receive

receive Honour from Us. And therefore you will find *David* doth not only stir up his Heart to the Work of Praise, but endeavours also to * *awake his Glory. My Heart is fixed, oh GOD! my Heart is fixed, I will sing and give Praise. Awake up my Glory.* That is, let my Tongue rouse and exert itself in this blessed Work; and that not barely in telling or shewing forth the Praises of GOD, but in singing them too. And therefore is this called † *Singing to GOD.*

AND when we do, in this manner, spread the real Sense of our Minds before GOD, or express it to him in Words, and pay Him Thanks for Benefits vouchsafed, or render Him the Praise of his own Glories and Perfections, we make our Praises an Offering or Sacrifice. And this brings me,

II. *Secondly,* To enquire in what Sense they who do so may be said to glorify GOD. And here it is obvious, that the *Psalmist* can't be understood of conferring any new Honour on GOD, or contributing any Thing to the Increase of his original and essential Glories. He is Himself the Perfection of Beauty, and the first Source of all Honour. He bestows all on his Creatures, but can properly receive nothing from Them, having in Himself the Perfection of all Being, Excellency and Honour.

It is true, we read in Scripture, of giving Glory to GOD; but this must not be understood, of communicating any Thing to Him, or conferring any Thing on Him which he had not before. One Passage of Holy Scripture will let us into the plain Meaning of this Expression. ** *Give to the LORD, ye Mighty, give to the LORD Glory and Strength.* For who can imagine that any of the mightiest among

* Psal. lvii. 7, 8.

† V. 9.

** Psal. xxxix. 1.

among the Children of Men, can make any Addition to the Power or Strength of GOD, who is Almighty, hath in himself the Fulness of Power, and can have no more than the utmost Degree of Power, of which he is eternally and unchangeably possess'd? And as little can they give Glory to Him as they can give Strength. It being impossible that any Addition should be made to the essential Dignity, Perfection or Excellency of GOD.

ALL the Glory GOD can receive from Us, is an Acknowledgment of what belongs to Him, join'd with a proper Degree of Esteem and Affection. We may take Notice of those Things in GOD which are glorious in Themselves, or those Appearances of GOD that are the proper Manifestations of his invisible and eternal GODHEAD and Glories; We may hereby endeavour to raise Wonder, and Love and Devotion to Him in our Hearts. And when such a Frame is wrought in our Minds, We may turn our Eyes towards Him, and signify thereby what an high Esteem and Veneration we have for Him in our Hearts; We may express this with our Mouths, or breath out the Devotion of our Souls in Songs of Praise. But we can proceed no farther. We may own Him glorious, but we cannot make him so. We can only contemplate, and esteem, and commend the glorious Things of GOD, made known to us by the Works of his Hands, or in the Word of his Grace. This is all the Glory we are capable of giving to GOD, That is, we can only acknowledge, with due Gratitude and Affection, that He is too glorious in Himself to receive any additional Glory from Us. That He is indeed **exalted far above all Blessing and Praise.*

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* Neh. ix. 5.

BUT though this be the true State of the Case, yet this manner of speaking in holy Scripture is in Accommodation to Us. And GOD signifies hereby, that though he can't receive Benefit from any Services of ours, yet all the Acts of genuine Piety are acceptable and pleasing to Him through Christ. And though our highest Praises can't add any Thing to Him, yet they shew that his Creatures have right and just Conceptions of Him, deep Convictions of his Being, Majesty and Excellencies, and that their Minds are under proper Impressions from them. In this Sense Praise may glorify GOD, *i. e.* own his Glories, and signify an Heart duly impress'd by Them.

AND, indeed, I am apt to think the Expression of glorifying GOD in the Text is *emphatical*, and intimates, that offering Praise is that Act of Religion which doth, above all others, glorify GOD, and is most pleasing to Him. This is the Work of Heaven. The *perpetual Employment* of glorious Angels, and glorified Souls, will be to praise GOD, to pay their most devout Thanksgivings to Him, and make the most hearty Acknowledgments of his Glory and Excellencies; or, in the Language of the *Psalmist*, to * *speak*, to sing of the *glorious Honour of his Majesty, and all his wondrous Works*. And what will be the eternal Employment of Heaven, must be the highest Act of Religion in it self, and the most fitted to glorify GOD: For there Religion is in Perfection, there GOD makes the clearest Discoveries of Himself to his Creatures, and there the highest Acknowledgments are made to Him for ever. All other Acts of Religion are but as so many Ascents therefore towards this; but when we are got hither, and
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* Psal. cxlv. 5.

[II]

our Tongues and Hearts are perpetually in Tune for the Work of Praise, the last Step is taken, we can go no higher. And what is the highest Act in Religion, must be most for the Glory of God, the great Object of Religion.

AND if we attend to the Nature of the Thing, the Truth can't but be obvious to every Mind. For it is in these Acts of Religion, that the Creature is most divested of all Regard to Himself, and swallow'd up of God. Whether *Praise* be understood to include *Thanksgiving* or exclude it. For as to *Thanksgiving*, it is the acknowledged Resentment of a Favour already receiv'd, of a past Benefaction, and as such it can have nothing selfish in it. It is an Acknowledgment of great Obligation, and, in this Case, without the least Prospect of Requital, and implies in it a very lively Sense and plain Confession of the Fullness and flowing Benignity of the divine Nature. And what is there selfish in all this? Is not God directly honour'd in all, without any regard to our Interests?

BUT as to *Praise* more strictly so called, as it signifies Esteem and Veneration for God, and becoming Acknowledgment of the infinite Excellencies of his Nature, and the glorious Preeminence of his Being and Majesty, this is plainly honouring Him for his own sake altogether. And though the Act will have the highest Pleasure annexed to it, when it is perform'd in the highest Degree, yet is it not perform'd with any View to our own Pleasure, but with a pure Regard to God. It is because he appears amiable, that we love Him; because he appears excellent that we applaud Him, and because he appears infinitely amiable and excellent that we praise him to the utmost of our Capacities. The Contemplation of his Glories, of his Attributes, of his wonderful Works of one kind and another, begets Esteem,

excites Wonder and Veneration, transports the Heart, tunes the Tongue, and swallows up the whole Mind. All this is Homage paid him for his own sake, and without any direct Regard or Concern for ourselves. And must not this be most of all for the divine Honour? It is plain that these Acts of Religion are perform'd upon no selfish Principles. And as GOD cannot be made more glorious by Us than He is in Himself, but all that his Creatures can do towards glorifying Him, is to observe, contemplate, and own, in a becoming Manner, the Glories he possesses; when this is done to the uttermost, he must be most glorified by Them. Now, when our Minds take in the clearest and the fullest Views of GOD, when our Hearts most fixedly chuse him and adhere to him, and rejoyce in him as the chief Good, and our Tongues hereupon break out into the most lively and devout Praises and Acknowledgments, it is manifest that He appears most glorious to Us, He is acknowledg'd most glorious by Us; and therefore, in the Sense of my Text, We do most glorify Him.

AND if we could be wholly abstracted from ourselves, and forget we are in Being whilst we make this Offering, and commend and celebrate the divine Glories, this would not abate, but rather improve our Satisfaction. So that our Happiness is at the Height, when our Minds are most taken up with the Contemplation of the divine Glories, most deeply impress'd by Them, and most transported with the Admiration and Love of them. And He, who in a right Frame of Mind offers Praise, though he should, in doing it, wholly overlook and forget Himself, yet takes the most direct Method in the World to raise his own Pleasure to the Height, and as he most glorifies GOD, doth at the same Time most delight and gratify Himself. And this brings me,

III. *Thirdly,*

III. *Thirdly,* To lay before you some of the principal Subjects of this Praise. For what should GOD be praised? And, according to the double Sense given the Word above, He should be praised,

(I. *First,*) FOR all the *Blessings and Benefits* he bestows upon Us. * *Bless the LORD, oh my Soul, and all that is within Me bless his holy Name. Bless the LORD oh my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits,* q. d. Forget none of them if possible, but keep in Mind how many and various They are. And, indeed, so many are the Favours all of Us receive from GOD, that they cannot be counted. If we would *declare and speak of Them, they are † more than can be numbred.* We are Debtors to Him for our Being, our Lives, our Senses, and our nobler Powers, for our Capacity of Bliss and Immortality: For all the outward Enjoyments of Life, for our Food, our Raiment, and the greater Abundance any of Us possess; for the Success of our Endeavours, and the Security of our Possessions. And we are much more indebted to him for the Contrivance of our Redemption, for the Manifestation of GOD in the Flesh, for the Sacrifice and Sufferings of the Son of GOD, and the Atonement for Sin made by his Death, for the Covenant of Grace, the Means of Salvation, and the free Enjoyment of them, especially if by the Spirit of Holiness they have been made effectual to our Sanctification, and we have hereupon any sure Hopes of everlasting Glory. In a Word, all the Ease We have in our Bodies, all the Peace we have in our Minds, all the Comfort we have in our Relations and Friends, and worldly Goods, all the
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* Psal. ciii. 1, 2.

† Psal. xl. 5.

Enjoyment we have of GOD in Ordinances, all the Hopes we have by CHRIST of a better World, should be Matter of Thanksgiving, and so of Praise to GOD. Upon all these Accounts should we pay our Thanks to GOD, and in so doing offer Praise.

AND, indeed, the Favours of GOD are so multiplied every Day, that we should daily make this Offering; we should be often praising GOD every Day of our Lives. Nor are we only to give him Thanks for Mercies personal and domestick, vouchsafed to ourselves and our Families, but for those we have in common with many Others. We should rejoyce in the Prosperity of our Country. And as the peaceable and flourishing Estate of it should yield Joy to Us, it also demands a Tribute of Thanks to GOD from Us. And distinguishing Favours of GOD to ourselves, our Families, or our Native Land, do, in a peculiar Manner, require our Praises and Thanksgivings; and that not only at the Time when they are first vouchsafed, but they should remain upon Record in our Minds, to be the Matter of frequent Thanksgivings to GOD. You will find, upon consulting them, that this is the very Purpose, for which many of the *Psalms* were penn'd, I mean, to be standing Memorials of the distinguishing Goodness of GOD to his People, and lasting Evidences that they did not lose the Sense of his Favours and Benefactions. But as GOD is to be prais'd for his Kindness to Us, he is much more to be praised,

(2. Secondly,) FOR the *Glories and Perfections* of his own Nature; for What He is in Himself, and for the Manifestations he has made of Himself, especially in the Works of *Creation, Providence* and *Redemption*. The essential Excellencies and Glories of the divine Nature, are to be the Matter of our highest Praise. When these are contemplated, admir'd,

mir'd, ador'd and celebrated, with the most hearty Devotion, and in the most lofty Strains of Praise; then is GOD most glorified. But we do not immediately at present behold GOD, nor can these Glories be the Subject of our Admiration and Praise, any farther than they are manifested and made known to Us. And therefore GOD has been pleased to shew himself to Us in his Works, especially those before mention'd, from all which we are to collect Matter of Praise to Him.

(1. First,) FROM the *Works of Creation.* The whole Frame of Nature is the Contrivance of divine Wisdom, and the Effect of divine Power and Goodness. And how evident are the Appearances of these Perfections throughout the Whole? * *How manifold are thy Works, saith the Psalmist, in Wisdom hast thou made them all.* The mighty Fabrick of the World stands as a convincing and illustrious Proof of the Being and Perfections of GOD. † *The Invisible Things of GOD, from the Creation of the World, may be seen by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.* ‖ *The Heavens declare his Glory, and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work.* And as the Appearances of Divinity are very plain on the whole Frame of Nature, so they should be remark'd to the Praise of its Author. ** *Remember, said the wise Elisha, that thou magnify his Works which Men behold.* The first Institution of the Sabbath seems to have been for this End, that GOD might have the Praise of his creating Power, Wisdom and Goodness given him on that Day, and therefore is that Reason annexed to the Command, *In six Days the LORD made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and All that in Them is, and rested the seventh Day.* And though the Christian Sabbath was appointed

* Psal. civ. 24.

† Rom. i. 20.

‖ Psal. xix. 1.

John xxxvi. 24.

appointed for other Purposes, yet not to the utter Exclusion of this. Redeeming Mercy is not so entirely to engage our Minds on this Day, as to take us off altogether from attending to the Appearances of GOD, on the Frame of Nature, or from rendering to Him the Praises due to his Name, as the Creator of all Things.

We shall find the *Royal Psalmist*, upon consulting his divine Compositions, to have been much employ'd in this Part of Praise; and that upon various Occasions. We have one general Song of Praise to this Purpose, in which he calls on * *the Sun, Moon and all the Stars of Light; on the Heaven of Heavens, and the Waters which are above the Heavens; on Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, Stormy Winds fulfilling his Word; on Mountains and Hills, fruitful Trees and Cedars; on Beasts and Cattle, and creeping Things, as well as on Men of all Ranks, to praise GOD.* Not that he could expect senseless and inanimate Beings should themselves offer direct Praise to GOD. But the rational Part of the Creation should take Notice of those Appearances of GOD that are on the rest, and take Occasion hereupon to offer up their Praise, and to magnify and celebrate that accurate Skill, that immense Power and rich Benignity of GOD, which shine forth, with so conspicuous a Lustre, from all the Works of his Hands. Inanimate Creatures praise GOD, by the Arguments they offer to the rational Part of their Fellow Creatures, to excite them to this Work. So that when the *Psalmist* calls on Brutes and Trees to praise GOD, it is only a fervent Wish that Mankind would attend to their Duty, and render to GOD the Glory of all his Works. But,

(2. Secondly,)

* Psal. cxlviii. 3, 4, 8, 9, 10.

(2. Secondly,) MATTER for divine Praise is also to be fetch'd from *the Works of Providence*. By this GOD sustains and manages all Things, and that according to his Pleasure, and with infinite Ease and Skill. And what Discoveries of his Perfections are made here? How immense must his Knowledge be, to have an Eye at once to all the great and little Affairs of the Universe? How vast must his Power be, to sustain the whole Fabrick, and give a due degree of Motion to the several Parts? to turn about the Planets in their various Orbs, to adjust all their Motions to their several Purposes! to continue the orderly Returns and Revolutions of the Seasons of the Year! How great is his Goodness * to cover *the Heavens with Clouds, and prepare Rain for the Earth, and make the Grass grow on the Mountains! To open the Hand of his Bounty, and † satisfy the Desire of every living Thing!*

HE is to be own'd and ador'd by Us, for exercising a Providence over all the Affairs of the World, the greatest and least, the most important and most trivial. It is *He that stretcheth out the Heavens as a Curtain, and spreadeth the Earth over the empty Space. ** He shuts up the Sea with Doors, and saith to it, hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud Waves be staid. He commandeth the Morning, and causeth the Day-spring to know his Place. He numbers the Clouds in Wisdom, and stayeth the Bottles of Heaven. †† He changeth the Times and Seasons; he removeth Kings and setteth up Kings. Nay, he concerns himself so much as with Sparrows, not *† one of Them falling to the Ground without Him. Nor doth he only manage the inanimate Part of the Creation according to his Pleasure, and make them serve his Purposes, but orders the Actions of*
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* Psal. cxlvii. 8.
 †† Dan. ii. 21.

† Psal. cxlv. 16.
 *† Matt. x. 29.

** Job xxxviii. 8, 11, &c.

voluntary Agents, so as to compass his own Designs. * *He doth according to his Pleasure in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth.* † *He brings the Counsels of the Heathen to nought, and makes the Devices of the People of none Effect.* ** *He turneth the wise Men backward, and maketh their Knowledge foolish.* But the †† *Council of the LORD standeth for ever, the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations.*

IT is true, there is, many times, a very great Darkness over the Ways of Providence; as to Us. The Conduct seems mighty intricate and perplex'd. But even this Darkness is venerable. We cannot penetrate it, but we dare not censure one Step taken by the supreme Manager. But when the Veil comes to be taken off, and the Measures of divine Providence to be understood, how *beautiful will his Work appear?* And this should raise the Wonder of every pious Observer, and fill their Minds with Esteem, their Hearts with Love, and their Mouths with Praises.

AND signal Appearances of GOD in the Course of his Providence, on behalf of Churches or Nations, should, in a particular Manner, be remark'd, and made Occasions of his Praise. When for their sakes He blinds the Eyes of Politicians, takes the *Crafty in their own Craftiness, and carries their Councils head-long*, or takes away all the Spirit and Courage of the Stout-hearted; and, in a critical Juncture, steps in and unravels at once Schemes that have a long time been laboured, and are just ripe for Execution.

AND can we forbear bringing this Home to our Case, this memorable Day? A Day that will ever stand distinguish'd in the *British Annals*, and be remembered

* Dan. iv. 35,
†† Psal. xxxiii. 11.

† Psal. xxxiii. 10.

** Esai. xlv. 25.

remembred by all, who love true Religion and Liberty, with Honour and a kind of Transport. It cannot be forgotten what a Gloom hung over us five Years ago, and with what dejected Looks and heavy Hearts all the Lovers of their Country mourn'd over it, and waited to see their Religion and Liberties at once torn from them, and lost beyond Recovery. When Wretches, resolv'd to deliver us up to our Enemies, and bring in an *attainted Impostor*, nurs'd up in the Maxims of Tyranny, and an implacable Bigot to *Rome*, to reign over a free and protestant People, had work'd themselves into the Favour of an easy Princess, and possess'd Themselves of all the Power of the Nation. When our *Allies* had been treacherously deserted, our *Forces* were disbanded, our *Forts*, in a manner, dismantled, and the *Guard* of our *Harbours* intrusted with such, as were avowed Enemies to our Constitution at that Time, and have since drawn their Sword against their Sovereign and their Country. When all the zealous Friends to the *Protestant Succession* were disgrac'd, and remov'd from all Places of Power and Authority, in which they were capable of serving and securing it; whilst, after many Professions of the utmost Zeal for it, the Queen either gave into the Measures of her Ministers, and countenanc'd the vile Design to destroy it; or, with an Indolence, not much less criminal, permitted herself to be govern'd by Them, and left them to pursue their own Measures without Controul. When the Pretender to the Crown, as his Declaration inform'd us, was on the Road to take Possession of it. When, in all these Circumstances, it was utterly out of our Power to save ourselves, and we could rationally look for Help no where else. How near were we to the Brink of Ruin? How ready were all Hearts to

faint, and give up whatever is dear to *Brissons* or Protestants for lost!

BUT in this Juncture divine Providence interpos'd, and brought our present Sovereign to the Throne in Peace, to the utter Confusion of the Enemies of their Country, and the utter Defeat of their Hopes, when they had just brought their Schemes to the Birth, and persuaded themselves they could not miscarry. The Turn was so sudden and unexpected, that we were *like Men that dreamt*. And the Concern of Providence in it was so visible, that when none else could, GOD did, as with his own Hands, snatch Us from the Jaws of Death. And should not this be Matter of Joy to Us, and Thanksgiving and Praise to Him? And still the Day looks bright upon Us. Neither the Opposition of *Enemies*, their secret Plots nor open Rebellions, nor the Defection and Indifference of *Friends* (if they can, indeed, be Friends to their King and Country, who, at such a Juncture, are indifferent) have hinder'd our Sovereign from pursuing his wise Measures to make Us safe and happy; and that with a Success even exceeding our Expectations. So that if our abounding Sins, and our unchristian Quarrels and Animosities, prevent it not, we hope the Foundations of Liberty, and true and pure, *i. e. scriptural* Religion will be fix'd amongst Us, and these great Blessings deriv'd down safe to our Posterity. And should not GOD have his Praise for such signal Appearances for a sinful People, and such Displays of his Wisdom, Power and Goodness in the Conduct of Providence? But.

(3. *Thirdly*,) THE great *Work of Redemption* is, in a particular Manner, to be the Subject of our Praise. The Method contriv'd and pursu'd, for the Salvation of laps'd Mankind, by the Incarnation, Obedience, Sufferings, Death and Interces-

sion

sion of GOD the Son, the second Person of the glorious and eternal Trinity. Who being from everlasting GOD, did yet, *in the Fullness of Time*, become Man, that he might mediate between GOD and Men, and make up the Breach which Sin had occasion'd, and bring about a mutual Reconciliation and Amity. This is that * *Mystery that was hidden from Ages and Generations, but is now made manifest to the Saints.*

AND how wonderful is it, that † GOD should be manifest in *Flesh*, that the eternal ** *Word* should be made *Flesh*! And this, that †† *a Body* being prepar'd for Him, He might, by shedding his own Blood, do what was impossible to be done by the Blood of Bulls and Goats, viz. take away Sin, or release Sinners, believing in him, from their Guilt! What Occasion hath divine Wisdom taken from the Transgression of Men, to magnify the rich Mercy of GOD, and yet at the same time honour his Justice, assert his Holiness, and maintain the Authority of his Laws, and Majesty of his Government! To shew, at once, implacable Hatred to Sin, and yet Kindness and Condescension to Sinners, passing all the Bounds of Thought. *† *Mercy and Truth do here meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other.* Sin is punish'd, and yet Sinners pitied. Rebels are discharg'd, and yet their injured Sovereign is pleas'd and satisfied.

ALL the Glories of the GODHEAD here mingle and unite their Splendors. *Wisdom* in contriving, and *Power* in bringing to effect, the great Model of our Salvation, *Faithfulness* in fulfilling all the Promises of the Word of GOD, *Holiness* in bearing the most awful Testimony against Sin,
Justice

* Col. i. 26.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.

** John i. 14.

†† Heb. x. 4. 5.

*† Psal. lxxxv. 10.

Justice in punishing it to the utmost, even much more severely than if the Sentence had been executed on the Guilty themselves, the Blood of GOD being incomparably more valuable than the Lives of all Mankind, and yet *Mercy* shines out here in its highest Lustre. The Love of GOD to Men is so illustrious nothing can be more. Every Page of the Gospel is commending and applauding it. * *GOD so loved the World, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* † *Herein is Love.* To save sinful Men, he ** *did not spare his own Son,* his only begotten Son. Pardon and Peace thus procured for Us, are much more valuable, and a much more affecting Proof of the Love of GOD to Us, than if they had been (if this could have been) freely bestow'd upon Us.

— THIS glorious Scene lies open to the Notice, and engages the Admiration of the holy Angels. They sing *Glory to GOD in the highest* upon this Occasion. And shall not We, who are much more concern'd than the Angels, turn our Eyes this Way, and contemplate a Scene so full of Glory, with Wonder, with Transport, with the highest Esteem of GOD, and Veneration for Him in our Hearts, and still gaze on till the Devotion of our Hearts breaks out into Songs of Praise, the most lofty Acclamations and Applauses, and the most joyful and triumphant *Hallelujahs!* Eternity itself will not be space enough to celebrate redeeming Love and Grace, and the other Perfections of GOD display'd in this great Work. But we should not delay our Praises till we arrive at the World of Praise, but endeavour, whilst we are on Earth, to get

* John iii. 16.

† 1 John iv. 10.

** Rom. viii. 32.

get our Hearts and Tongues in Tune, for what will be our perpetual Employment, if we are so happy, at last, as to get to Heaven.

AND thus you see, that the Wonders of creating Power and Wisdom, of providential Goodness and Skill; but, above all, the glorious Appearances of GOD in the great Work of Redemption, should be much the Subject of our serious and delightful Thoughts, and thereby stir up our Hearts to Admiration and Devotion, and tune our Tongues to Songs of Praise. *Whoso offereth Praise upon these Accounts glorifieth GOD.* And this brings me, in the

IV. And last Place, To apply all in two or three Inferences. And hence we may learn,

I. *First*, WHAT to think of them who *never offer Praise to GOD at all.* It is plain that they have little Concern for his Glory and Honour. Nay, it is but too obvious, that they are utterly destitute of all Religion. For can any Man believe that GOD is, acknowledge the Perfections of his Being, own him for the Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth, and the Wise Governor of the World, or give hearty Credit to all that is said of his glorious Grace in the Holy Scriptures, and yet never honour, esteem, admire and applaud Him in his Heart, nor make any Acknowledgment of this with his Mouth, nor offer up these Affections and Acknowledgments to Him in Acts of Praise? And can there be any Religion, where there is no thorough Belief of these Things, nor due Impressions of them on the Mind? Indeed, Praise is the noblest Part of Religion. Employment for those who have made the greatest Proficiency in it. But none who have the true Principles of Religion can be wholly Strangers to it. Such therefore, as never lift
their

their Hearts towards GOD, nor admire and adore him, for the Displays he has made of his Glories, in the Creation of all Things, and the Providence he exercises over them ; or in the Redemption of Mankind from Guilt and Wrath by JESUS CHRIST. Such as never offer up their Thanks to Him for his Mercies to themselves, nor their Praises for the Excellencies and Perfections of his own Nature, or his glorious Operations, must be utter Strangers to true and genuine Religion, and never felt the Power of it.

AND yet how common a Case is this in the World? How many are richly favour'd with the common Bounties of Providence, have large Estates, and great Success in their Undertakings, and yet never own their Obligations to GOD, nor pay him any Thanks at all? Nay, 'tis too common a Practice, for Men to ascribe all to themselves, and disown their Debt to divine Bounty. And what Multitudes are there among such as call Themselves Christians, who never take any serious Notice at all of the Glories of GOD shining forth on the Works of his Hands, or manifested and magnified in the Word of his Grace, nor ever improve them into Wonder, Affection, and Praise! How many enjoy and abuse the Bounties of Providence, but never so much as think of their Concern with GOD, or the Homage of this kind which they owe to Him? but * *have the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe, and Wine in their Feasts, but regard not GOD nor the Operation of his Hands.* 'Tis but too common to convert Days of Thanksgiving into Seasons of Riot and Excess. We may infer,

II. Secondly,

II. *Secondly*, THOSE who are Christians in Sincerity, are very blameable for *their great Defects as to this Duty*. They are not as often, nor as much, nor as much elevated in offering Praise as they ought to be. Out of ten Lepers healed, there was but one who return'd * *to give Glory to G O D*. 'Tis well if our Praises hold the Proportion of one in ten to what we owe to G O D. We may be earnest with him in Prayer. Our own Wants may urge Us to frequent and fervent Supplications. But who of Us have so deep a Concern for the Glory of G O D, or so disinterested a Regard to it, as to spend so much Time, or have our Hearts so much engag'd in praising G O D, as in praying to Him ?

AND yet Praise is the noblest Act of Religion. It is the Perfection of it. It is almost the whole Business of those who are perfected in the heavenly State. And is not this a Life to which we all professedly aspire ? And should we not begin that Work here on Earth, and endeavour to grow familiar to it, which we hope will be at once our perpetual Employment and Delight in Heaven ? Is not a Life of Praise the most delightful that can be ; and what will, above all others, enliven, elevate and make glad the Soul ? Would it not support under many a Burthen, and satisfy many a Doubt, and dispel many a gloomy and dismaying Fear, if we could accustom ourselves to this noble Exercise ? Were that Time spent in praising G O D, especially for the Wonders of his Love and Grace by J E S U S C H R I S T, which Christians in doubt are apt to spend in poring on Themselves,

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would

* Luke xvii. 17, 18.

would it not much sooner give Ease and Satisfaction to the Mind?

AND are not Christians then to be blamed for their Defects as to this Duty? That they are so little practis'd in this most noble and relishing of all the Services of Religion. Is not GOD hereby greatly dishonour'd, and do not they themselves receive great Damage by it? Would they not much more glorify GOD, and much better please him? Would they not have much more Communion with GOD, and Delight in Him, and would it not be much better then for Themselves, if they did more frequently offer Praise to Him? Those happy Spirits perfectly and perpetually please Him, and have perfect and perpetual Delight in him, whose perpetual Business it is to offer perfect Devotion and Praise to him in Heaven. And surely the more we do of the Work of Heaven on Earth, the more shall We enjoy of the Happiness of it. And should not Christians blame themselves for their Neglect of GOD and their own Interests, of which they are deeply guilty, by neglecting this Work of Praise. But,

III. *Thirdly*, LET us stir up ourselves to give *Glory to GOD by offering Praise to Him*, by being much in this noble and delightful Exercise. Let us give him sincere and hearty Thanks for his manifold Favours, for the most common, and much more for any distinguishing Instances of his Bounty to Us. Let us give unto Him the *Praise due to his Name*, for what appears of his Perfections and Excellencies on the Works of Creation, in the Conduct of Providence; but especially in all the Wonders of redeeming Wisdom, Power and Love. Not forgetting any signal Appearances of GOD, on behalf of his Churches, or our People and Nation.

tion. Let us be much in contemplating the glorious Perfections of GOD, as they are impress'd upon the Works of his Hands, or offer themselves to view in the Word of his Grace; and continue to contemplate till we are affected with Wonder, enflamed with Devotion, and seiz'd with the utmost Veneration; till we feel our Hearts transported, and our Tongues tuned to a Song of Praise. Let us accustom ourselves to offer Praise till it becomes natural and delightful, till we feel our Hearts bent for this Employment, apt and prompt to the Exercise.

It is the noblest Work in the World: 'Twill be the Employment of Heaven: GOD expects it from us: Our own Hearts will be made glad by it. And at this Time the Season invites to it. This very Day is *the Day the LORD hath made*, and made a joyful Day to every hearty *Protestant*, and every true *Briton* in these Lands; and we should take Occasion, from what of GOD appears upon it, to be much in his Praises. Let every Heart adore, and every Tongue break forth into a Song. *This GOD is our GOD*, and we hope will be so *for ever and ever*.—— And his own Day is now approaching, and that a Day more solemn than ordinary, when a *Feast of fat Things, of Wine on the Lees well refin'd*, is to be set forth before many of Us, the bleeding Love of our sacrificed Lord is to be called to remembrance, and all the Wonders of Redemption are to be commemorated. Oh let what has been said at this Time, put our Minds in Tune for Praise, that we may meet the LORD's Day, and those of Us who are to attend there, may meet him at his Table, with Hearts warm'd, enlarg'd, apt and ready to flow out in Thanksgivings, Admiration and Applauses of his Grace, and all other his glorious Perfections, shining

ning forth in the great Event, which is there to be celebrated. This way we shall glorify GOD, and be helped to order our Conversation aright; and in the End see the Salvation of the LORD.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, for the Sake of our blessed Redeemer, to whom be Glory and Dominion for ever. Amen.

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